

Library Info Alert September 2005

Library Info Alert focuses on recent developments in the field of library science and information management in the United States. It contains summaries of articles from leading library-related periodicals and recommended Internet sites. The *Library Info Alert* is published by the Information Resource Centers in Germany.

1. Digital Reference Research: Fusing Research And Practice

(Reference and User Services Quarterly, Summer 2005, Vol. 44, Iss. 4, pp. 320 - 327)

This article presents the Digital Reference Research agenda developed as a result of a three-day symposium at Harvard University. It shows how the research agenda ties directly to digital reference and library practice and argues that research and practice must connect on a meaningful level in order to prevent unusable research and untestable practice.

2. Libraries, Literacy and Learning in the 21st Century

(American Libraries, August 2005, Vol. 36, Iss. 7, pp. S1 – S12)

Today the ability to read and write is critical, and basic literacy skills extend far beyond what was needed 100 years ago. Life in the 21st century demands that one has the ability to solve information problems, use many different media and understand cultural diversity. The phrase "21st century literacy" encompasses the array of complex skills people need to live, learn and work successfully in the digital age.

3. Steel Away

(School Library Journal, September 2005, Vol. 51, Iss. 9, pp. 46 - 50)

Let's face it. These are challenging times for school librarians. If they're not being threatened with outright layoffs, they feel pressured to justify their existence and prove-quantitatively-the value of what they do. That's, of course, if they're not being ignored by teachers and administrators who view the library as little more than a nice place to check out books or park the kids during teacher prep.

4. Performance Measures for Information Centers

(Information Outlook, August 2005, Vol. 9, Iss. 8, pp. 8 - 16)

Debbie Schachter comments that recently, she has become more interested in and involved in the art of measuring performance outputs and outcome. This relates to the work she has been doing in the non-profit sector, writing grant proposals for services and program funding, and then writing reports on the effectiveness of these services. Obviously, most corporate libraries and information centers have been grappling with this problem for a long time, but expectations of how to show value continually change in the corporate and nonprofit worlds.

5. Public Libraries Struggle to Meet Internet Demand

(American Libraries, August 2005, Vol. 36, Iss. 7, pp. 78 - 80)

Nearly every US public library offers free access to computers and the Internet, but overall libraries are challenged to provide enough workstations to meet demand, pay for ongoing online connectivity costs, and plan for necessary upgrades to the technology. That's the conclusion of Public Libraries and the Internet 2004: Survey Results and Findings, a report issued in June by the Information Use Management and Policy Institute at Florida State University in Tallahassee and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the ALA.

6. Core Competencies

(Library Administration and Management Summer 2005, Vol. 19, Iss. 3, pp. 146 - 149)

The author discusses the core competencies that embody the essence of librarianship. Librarians need to appreciate the task of identifying services that will make a difference in the lives of citizens and students, the task of creating the public value-services that they will be willing to support financially. Robert F. Moran is a library consultant.

7. Google Scholar: What's in It for You?
(Information Today, July/August 2005, Vol. 22, Iss. 7, pp. 35 - 37)

If your research is casual, Google Scholar will easily provide a small but representative selection of scholarly research on most subjects. If your research is serious, however, Google Scholar should be your last option - if you decide to use it at all. Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>) is an aggregation of mostly bibliographic, scholarly research that's generally not available on the public Web. Its content is derived from three sources: 1. proprietary databases covering a range of scholarly and technical disciplines, 2. Web sites of scholarly and technical publishers, and 3. intranets of research institutions (usually universities).

8. A New Look at Lifelong Access
(American Libraries, September 2005, Vol. 36, Iss. 8, pp. 42 - 45)

Innovative projects tap the interests and skills of a growing population of active, older adults. Librarians in the collaboration with the national nonprofit Libraries for the Future develop new ways of thinking about the trajectory of life. Diantha Dow Schull, president of the America's for Libraries Council, discusses the new look at lifelong access in library service.

9. The ALA Annual Conference: A Post-Show, Paper-Based Log
(Information Today, September 2005, Vol. 22, Iss. 8, pp. 37 - 41)

Stretching for miles from the grand and historic Loop hotels in Chicago along the park to the remotely located McCormick Place exhibition center, this ALA annual mega-event took the prize for outshining all previous conferences. As the centerpiece and lead speaker for OCLC's pre-ALA Symposium in Chicago, Chris Anderson, editor in chief of Wired magazine, was joined by panelists John Blossom (president and senior analyst at Shore Communications, Inc.), Chuck Eichard (vice president and lead analyst at Outsell, Inc.), and Nancy Davenport (president of the Council on Library and Information Resources) to discuss what the Long Tail theory means for libraries and library collections. Abby Goodrum, the researcher who

put together the ALA Washington Office study intended to root out data from librarians about the impact on public and academic libraries from law enforcement activity. The preliminary results, which were reported at a pre-ALA Chicago 05 conference session, drew a few sighs of disappointment from the small, but engaged, early morning crowd.

10. Online Intrigue in an Arizona Library
(The Horn Book Magazine, Sep/Oct 2005, Vol. 81, Iss. 5, pp. 537- 542)

On Oct 1, 2003, the Maricopa County Library District, along with author James M. Deem, made history when the first chapter of Deem's novel, The Mystery Club of Luna Drive, went live on the Maricopa County Library District's Web site. At the core of this project was the desire to motivate kids to read in any way possible.

11. Save Professionalism
(Library Journal, September 1, 2005, Volume 130, Iss. 14, p. 8 –editorial- and pp. 46-48)

Bill Crowley comments that libraries have drifted from their center role as an educational institution, to that of an "information clearing house". The change has occurred due to libraries adopting the business model of doing more with less. Yet, writes Mr. Crowley, libraries cannot compete with the likes of Yahoo! And Google in the information marketplace. Instead, libraries should recapture their central role of being primarily an educational center. The key to this is for libraries to hire well-qualified librarians – mainly those who are graduates of programs accredited by the ALA.

NOTE: Library Info Alert is available to subscribers only. You may contact us through e-mail to order the requested material. Full text of articles will be sent to you as soon as possible.

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